

Kyodan

News Letter

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN JAPAN
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DEGUCHI NAMED SECRETARY

The Rev. Mr. Tsutomu Deguchi, moderator of Kanagawa district, has been named secretary of the Kyodan, completing the officers' cabinet.

A graduate of Tokyo Union Theological Seminary, Deguchi serves the Rokkakubashi Church in Yokohama, in the neighborhood where he has lived since boyhood. He will continue as Kanagawa district moderator.

Deguchi, who is forty-seven years old, is known for his administrative ability and his creativity in music, two of his songs being church school favorites.

TOWARD A PREPARATION COMMITTEE

Persons named by their respective districts to serve on the Preparation Committee for the 18th General Assembly met with Kyodan officers March 12-13.

Most of those present seemed to feel that the 17th Assembly made a little progress toward achieving dialogue within the Kyodan and urged this stance be continued in preparations for and conduct of the 18th General Assembly.

Mondai teikisha (problem posers) from the three districts that have been unable to hold their assemblies were present and asked for a place on the Preparation Committee. It was decided not to organize the committee until districts could be queried on the idea of having the officers name persons from among the mondai teikisha to serve on the committee with the delegates named by the districts' executive or other committees.

Meetings were low key but marked by the apparent desire of each participant to hear and understand what others were saying and feeling and to respond frankly.

SHARED SUPPORT FUND REACHES ¥30 MILLION IN 1973

More than ¥30,000,000 (\$100,000) has been contributed by Japanese schools and churches during the first year of the new Shared Support plan for North American missionaries, according to the Rev. Mr. Yoichiro Saeki, Acting General Secretary of the Council of Cooperation. Some 30 COC-related bodies have made payments into the Shared Support Fund, which is forwarded to cooperating mission boards for their missionary support budgets.

Saeki estimates that Shared Support will exceed ¥60,000,000 in 1974, based on estimated contributions from 34 schools and churches.

The council, whose Japan members are the Kyodan, the COC-related Schools Council and the Christian Social Work League, is responsible for the assignment of some 233 missionaries from Canada and the United States, working primarily in connection with COC-member bodies. The Kyodan also receives missionaries from Germany but the historical development and current patterns of cooperation are on a different basis.

"For some time we've been defining the missionary as 'a Christian worker sent into Japanese society by two churches,'" says Saeki, who is secretary of the Kyodan Commission on Mission and author of several articles on the missionary. "Shared support is the concrete financial expression of this shared responsibility."

The present Shared Support contributions represent only a small portion--perhaps 6%--of the total 1973 support budget for COC missionaries. As one guide to the pattern that may eventually evolve Saeki refers to the principle established by the Christian Conference in Asia that partner churches should bear not less than 25% and not more than 75% of the missionary support costs.

(continued)

Saeki feels that, as far as the COC is concerned, Shared Support is a step toward internationalization. "Often big expressions like 'mission on six continents' or 'the internationalization of missionary personnel and resources' are used. But unless funds flow in multiple directions, these expressions are just word play. When the Christian community in Japan is ready to share financially in the support of missionary personnel from abroad then we can invite personnel from various parts of the world."

At the present time the COC does not take major responsibility for setting missionary salaries and determining housing policies, and Saeki thinks it should not.

"My basic attitude" he says, "is that there is no theological or missiological principle involved in the administration of mission board property or housing or the setting of salary schedules. It is purely a matter of

convenience. The question is whether COC or Kyodan would be wise to assume responsibility for these in view of the work they involve and the effort being made to reduce office costs."

The COC position is in rather sharp contrast to that in other countries, where national bodies want to assume complete responsibility, and to the opinion of mission board secretaries that these responsibilities should be assumed by the COC or the Kyodan.

How does Saeki feel North American congregations that have taken pride in supporting particular missionaries will view Shared Support?

"I hope they will rejoice in the fact that they now have a partner," says Saeki, noting the financial strains that all mission boards are now under. "I hope they will look upon Shared Support as the fruits of their labor."

1972 TABULATIONS REFLECT TRIBULATIONS

Statistics for the year 1972 (April 1972 through March 1973) compiled for 1,493 churches, total 195,971 members according to the 1974 Kyodan Nenkan (Yearbook). This compares with 1,524 churches reporting 200,800 members in the previous year.

The 154 non-reporting churches include some inactive churches but also a number of quite active churches that for various reasons--a dislike of recordkeeping, a reaction against district or national policies--have stopped reporting. A church that does not submit statistics for three years is dropped from tabulations although included in the overall total of churches.

The change in base makes comparisons difficult. However, several preaching points have emerged as established churches; the number of pastors has increased; there is an increase of ¥118.4 million in contributions; and a casual review of local church figures shows a rather general pattern of membership additions.

	1972*	1971*
Number of churches	1,647	1,646
Established congregations	1,344	1,339
Preaching points	303	307
Number of active ministers	1,974	1,958
Ordained	1,603	1,590
Serving in churches	1,429	1,414
Serving in other assignments	174	176
Licensed preachers	371	368
Number of churches reported below	1,493	1,524
Number of members	195,971	200,800
Active resident members	96,946	100,197
Active non-resident members	31,010	31,109
Average Sunday worship attendance	44,871	46,112
Baptisms during the previous 12 months	3,091	3,222
Adults	2,738	2,860
Children	353	362
Church Schools	1,434	1,466
Students	102,574	105,086
Average Attendance	70,633	71,740
Offerings (millions of yen)	1,991.3	1,773.2

*Year runs April through March

HUMAN RIGHTS - frontier of mission

In the last issue of KNL, Lawyer Kenkichi Nakadaira told why he resigned from the Tokyo High Court to stand with those seeking justice in the courts.

"Why," I asked, "have Christians become more active in legislation and legal cases in recent years?"

"Isn't it that the church's eyes have been opened to social problems? Under the Meiji Constitution, Christians were severely restricted in expressing political and social opinion. Had they acted otherwise, Christianity would have been suppressed. As a result, the church came to put its 'weight' on man's inner life, peace of mind, salvation in purely spiritual terms.

"Fortunately, the Postwar Constitution established freedom of belief. Therefore churches and Christians are now free to express themselves on social and political matters.

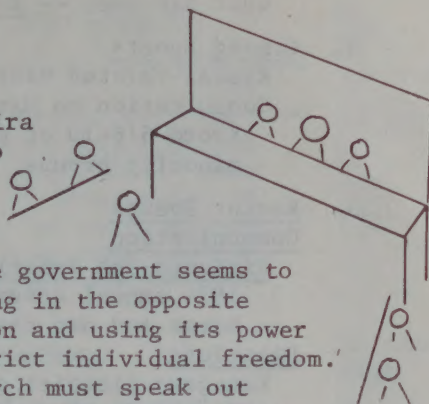
"The Japanese church has come to a fuller understanding of the Gospel as promising the forgiveness of sin as well as calling the church to work for the realization of men's basic human rights."

Do you feel that in Japan the human rights' cause falls particularly to Christians?

"Yes, I think so, because Christians have the best basis for understanding human rights. In Japan, the sense of religious commitment is very weak so the importance of freedom of belief is not well understood. Intellectuals applaud systems that overcome the problem of poverty but overlook their denial of men's basic rights.

"Actually, there is a rather strong posture of respect for human rights developing in the Japanese church.

"We aren't doing as much as churches and Christians in Europe and the United States. But from now on I think we must put more energy into securing the rights of those who are discriminated against, particularly at a time



when the government seems to be moving in the opposite direction and using its power to restrict individual freedom. The church must speak out clearly on such issues in the future."

Some people predict, from the present state of things, that the end of the world is near. Do you share this view?

"No, I'm not a 'prophet of doom.' I'm willing to entrust the future to God. Actually, I think these are quite favored times. Things are better than than have ever been in Japan.

"But if I think we are to keep our civilization from decaying, Christians must increasingly be willing to suffer in the role of mediators, we must become Modern Jobs. As Christ took the path that led to the Cross, so we too must be willing to bear the cross as those to whom this task is given in God's plan for the world."

What do you see as common tasks of Christians in Japan and other countries?

"In every country the proclamation of the Gospel and salvation of men is very important, and this salvation includes the salvation of those whose rights as human beings have been denied or violated.

"This is the mission of Christians in each country. And Christians in different countries must support and encourage one another, particularly in times of great difficulty.

"In the case of countries like Red China, USSR and North Korea, where men may have been released from poverty but lack freedom of belief, we as Christians must affirm the fact that no government has the right to take away a man's fundamental right to the freedom of faith."

what has been -- I N T H E K Y O D A N -- what is to be

I. Coming Events

Kyodan-related Missionaries' Conference to be held 3/26-28 at Tozanso Consultation on Minority Problems and Mission Strategy to be held in Kyoto 5/6-10 of persons from Latin and North America and Asia minority groups

II. Recent Events

Communication

Kirisuto-sha Janarisuto Kaigi (Christian Journalists' Conf.) holds 1974 annual assembly 2/26, issues statement on recent problems in Korea and own responsibility (Shimbun 3/16)

Districts

Kanagawa district assembly 2/19, begins season of annual meetings for Kyodan districts (Shimpo 3/9)

Hyogo district approves Moderator I. Tanaka's resignation, elects Rev. T. Serino new moderator (Shimpo 3/9)

Kyodan

Rev. T. Deguchi, Kanagawa district moderator, is elected Kyodan secretary (Shimpo 3/9, Shimbun 3/9, KNL 3/74)

Officers' cabinet decides 2/21 to organize special committee for ministerial training and qualification problems (Shimpo 3/9)

District representatives meet 3/12-13, discuss how to organize 18th Kyodan General Assembly Preparation Com. (KNL 3/74)

Kyodan Fukuin-shugi Domei (Kyodan evangelical assoc.) holds organizational meeting 3/12 at Misaki-cho Church in Tokyo (Shimbun 3/9)

New Kyodan representatives are named to NCC Exec. Com.: I. Toda, I. Ono, T. Deguchi, Y. Hirai; to COC: I. Toda, I. Ono, T. Deguchi

Missionaries

Japan-based COC-member bodies contribute ¥30 million to missionary support in 1973 in new Shared Support program (KNL 3/74)

Publications

Kyodan Hymnal Com. and Board of Publication plans publication of ecumenical "Songs of Faith Today" for 100th anniversary of first Japanese hymnal, 1874 (Shimbun 3/2)

Women

U.S. Church Women United holds joint seminar with church women of Japan and other Asian countries, discussing economic and social problems and interconnectedness

Two offices, one in Germany and one in New York, are now receiving the Kyodan Shimpo, Shinto no Tomo and other Japanese and English materials:

South German Mission Center
7 Stuttgart 1
Vogelsangstraße 62, West Germany
Rev. Paul Schneiss, Secy.

Japan-North American Commission
on Cooperative Mission
Interchurch Center Room 618
475 Riverside Drive
New York, N.Y. 10027
Dr. Robert Northup, Exec. Secy.

In addition, Japanese and American English periodicals are being sent regularly to the World Council of Churches Library, 150 route de Ferney, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland, and to the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey.

Persons in Europe and North America may wish to draw on the resources of these offices.

NATIONAL FEDERATION

全国教会 OF 婦人会連合

KYODAN WOMEN'S SOCIETIES

1-551-21, Tozuka-cho, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo

1974



Rainbow Haven

Present Course of the National Federation of Kyodan Women's Societies

The National Federation of Kyodan Women's Societies is in its 5th year since it became autonomous and continues to move forward. Our goal is always the autonomy of Christian women and our solidarity in Christ. Since it is written in Galatians 3:28, "So there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, between slaves and free men, between men and women; you are all one in union with Christ Jesus," we would like to search out our independent ways of life as women who are truly awakened in Christ.

The theme for this term has been chosen to be: "To Share in Christ's Suffering — for the Progress of the Gospel." The world has never suffered as it is suffering in this era. As we suffer together with our neighbors we ponder on "What is the Salvation of Christ?" Not only by studying about Jesus Christ, who suffered and died for the world and for our sins, but by participating in the Church, His Body, we Christians hope to join in the suffering of Jesus Christ. In order to become deeply aware of the problems of the era and society and to respond to them we want to further make known to the world the source of the Power of the Good News of Christ. Therefore we consider it an honor to be called to share in the mission of the church and hope to carry on our work with enthusiasm.

In our modern society we are especially trying to find out what is hindering evangelism. We often find that many of the problems are not

only other people's problems but have their roots within ourselves. In order to stand fast together as Christ's witnesses by further studying the Good News by Christ and also by discerning sharply the situation in our present society, we have plans and activities mentioned in the articles following.

Rainbow Haven

"Rainbow Haven" is the beautiful name given to the living quarters for retired women pastors and widows of ministers, the first concrete project of the Kyodan church women. This is a home for those who look toward a rich old age believing in God's promise and living in reconciliation with God as symbolized by the rainbow which appeared after the Flood. The present capacity of the private living quarters is only 10, but the uniqueness is that there is a center with lodging facilities for 30, which is being used for church conferences and meeting for the people of the community.

This is a rather unique situation that in Japan we have about 500 women pastors who are mostly single and have no family to depend on. Even though there has been increased consideration by the government for the welfare of the aged, it is impossible for the individual church to take care of pastors after they retire. In order to make it possible for them to serve without worry, it was necessary for church women to carry out this project.

In 1966 this issue was first taken up at the area retreat in Kansai, and one member gave ¥3,000 as the first offering. This single seed bloomed after a few years and today bears fruit as the "Rainbow Haven."

This attempt brought a change in our attitude and understanding about the offering of things and money. For by just giving surplus from our family budget we would not have been able to collect \$200,000.—. (Land 2,424 m², Building 480 m³). From our tight family budget, we learned to give positively towards God's work. Fund raising began in the fall of 1971; in the fall of '72 the building started, and in May 1973, it was accomplished. We received a generous offering from the United Methodist Church in the USA, and from other churches abroad. We

also received offerings from the "Least Coin Fellowship." Through this work the unity of the National Federation within Japan was tested and we tasted the joy of worldwide Christian unity. With this as our first attempt we hope to gather together the power of women and take part in God's plan for evangelism in Japan.

Bible Story Committee

The desire of all Christian mothers is first of all that the children who have been entrusted to them by God will grow up to believe in God. And children first learn to call on the name of God from the person who is closest to them, usually the mother.

It was this committee whose members considered together how to retell the stories of the Bible, which they always hear at church, in words that children can easily understand and it resulted in their beginning to rewrite the stories. Each member brought the stories which they had rewritten and read them to the group for criticism. By doing this, it became a wonderful opportunity for them to deepen their understanding of the Bible and clarify their confession of faith.

In this way, "The Parables of Jesus for Mother and Child" came into existence and was published as a book. Even though the work may be amateurish, this simple experiment brought joy to many people.

In our society where the customs and traditions of Buddhism and Shintoism prevail, and in an age which is tossed about by various ideologies and trends of time, a mother's important responsibility is to help with the religious education of her children.

Using such books as a means, it is our desire that many opportunities will be found for mothers and their children to come together to learn that the love of God is something very close to them. Our plan is to rewrite the Life of Christ and also some of the Old Testament stories with the help of new members from other parts of Japan.

Committee to Study Problems of Women Pastors

At present there are about 500 women pastors in the United Church of Christ in Japan. These women received the call to preach the Word of God and are working in churches and in Christian schools, but they have many problems as pastors and as women.

The problem which is fundamental is: "What is a pastor?" Other recurring problems are: "What must pastors do?" and "What are the duties of pastors?" These are not problems for women pastors only, but also for men and they should be considered together.

Besides these, there are special problems because they are women. For instance, "How can married women pastors be faithful to their calling and remain responsible to their families?" In Japan the situation is that married women are expected to spend much time and effort in housework and in bringing up their children. Since pastors are not well off, in order to help support the family, women at times have to take side jobs. While in thus caring for the family they cannot find time to study and lose chances to really serve as women pastors; so before long they are in danger of becoming pastors in name only, or they become dissatisfied with their work. This is the mutual predicament of married women pastors.

According to statistics 60 to 70% of the women pastors help with home meetings, church schools and house visitations, while only about 38% are preaching regularly. We are not sure whether this is because women are not as competent because of insufficient study as mentioned before, or whether they are used more for home meetings, church schools and visitations because they are gentle as women, or whether Japanese churches and Japanese society simply do not accept women on the same level as they do men. It may be that all these reasons together bring about such a situation. We believe that we have been called to this sacred duty which has no discrimination and want to be faithful to the call. Regardless of being married or not, we are seeking a way by which we can make a special contribution as women.

Recently a Home for Retired Women Pastors and Widows of Ministers, called "Rainbow Haven" was built. How the residents will be able to live their new life with faith and hope is also another of the problems facing us.

The purpose of this committee is to bring women pastors together to consider such issues so that women pastors may be able to respond to their calling better all through their life. A book club and regular discussion meetings have also been set up for this purpose.



Meeting Korean Friends in Taequ, Korea

Our country is guilty of grave sins against Korea. Even though we bear this great burden, because of our belief in Christ, our desire is to work hand in hand with our brothers and sisters in Korea for the glory of the Lord. Also within our country there are many Koreans who are living under unjust discrimination. We feel our guilt and are distressed at their miserable circumstances. Moreover, at the present time, politically and economically our two countries have close relationship and consequently various new problems have arisen. For us church women of both countries, as Christians and as branches of the same church, there are many responsibilities which we must bear together. We Japanese Christians have much to learn from the churches and the church women of Korea. By finding friends within the church of Korea, our desire is to bear our common problems together.

Actually we regret that we are so ignorant about Korea, about the church in Korea, and even about the problems of the Koreans who are living in our midst. So this committee was formed in September 1973 with the intention to learn. Those of us who have the same purpose gather together and are studying the church history of Korea from Professor Myon Kwan Chi of Tok Song Junior College of Seoul, and about the problems of the Koreans in Japan from Rev. In Ha Lee, pastor of the Kawasaki Korean Church and moderator of the Korean Church in Japan. As there are already many people and groups that are concerned about the problems of the Koreans in Japan, we hope to gain enough knowledge so as to be able to act effectively with them.

One of the projects in which we have a part is to support a young Japanese minister who has gone to Korea as a fraternal worker to teach in a seminary and to assist in a church.

Opposition to the Yasukuni Shrine Bill - Demonstration by Women and Children -

We can never forget the special position of National Shintoism and the Yasukuni Shrine in the part they played as the main support for the Japanese Emperor system and militarism in the past. After the war this special position of National Shintoism and the Yasukuni Shrine was abolished and National Shintoism became another religious body like any other religion. Thus, through our Peace Constitution, freedom of religion was promised to us.

However, the majority party of the government has presented the Yasukuni Shrine Bill to the National Diet 5 times since 1969. It is an attempt to nationalize the Yasukuni Shrine in

order to deify the war victims of the Second World War and also of future wars.

There has been continued opposition to this Bill by many from many different angles. We, the church women, who seek peace gather together at Shitaya Church near Ueno Station in Tokyo every second Tuesday with the prayer that this Bill will not be passed so that Japan will not repeat the same sin she committed against her neighboring countries in the past.

For about 4 years, even during the hottest summer and coldest winter, we have carried on quiet demonstrations. Also we have had a study group for women every 4th Friday to study the history of resistance during World War II, Japan-Korea relations in the past and the Emperor System.



*Church Women Oppose the
Yasukuni Shrine Bill*

Text Book Committee

The text books that children receive with joy and anticipation when they first enter elementary school make a deep impression on them. These text books have a great influence in the formation of the children's character.

When changes and errors in the text books, especially in history text books, came to the attention of Christian mothers, we organized a committee to make a study on the development of text books.

Text books have changed greatly since World War II; an education which stressed militarism, ultra-nationalism and the Shinto-doctrine was rejected, and democracy, peace and science were emphasized. A system in which the Ministry of Education decided what text books would be published was abolished and was changed so that the Education Ministry only approved text books prepared by the publishers. However, as the years went by new laws were passed to censor text books and the inspection became stricter and the contents of the text books were greatly changed.

As we continued to make efforts to discover what the present text books are like and what text books should be, we realized that at the source of this problem lay the matter of political power intervening in education. In other words

educational autonomy should be the prerogative of the state but of the people and we must all realize that we ourselves should educate each other.

The members of this committee are also active in the PTA. Therefore, we investigated whether this idea that the people and not the state have the right to educate was clear among the PTA members by sending out questionnaires. We found that this principle was not understood well enough.

The question "What is the function of text books?" developed into the question "What is education?" which the committee is wrestling with at present.

Service Towards Seirei-en

As a concrete manifestation of the confession of war guilt for the Second World War by the United Church of Christ in Japan, a special home for the Aged Bomb Victims in Hiroshima, called Seirei-en, was opened in September, 1971.

At present there are 48 residents. Two church women serve as dormitory mothers. Among the residents there are 16 atomic bomb victims, two of whom are Koreans. Donations of necessities, such as night gowns; diapers, pillow cases, clothes and clothing material continue to be sent by church women's groups throughout Japan.



Church Women Help Atomic Bomb Victim

Every week volunteers from local church women's groups go to visit and help fold diapers, mend clothes and do the cleaning.

Besides undertaking such jobs as preparation of meals, nursing, medication, and giving bathes, it is also necessary to understand the spiritual need in order to relate to the elderly. We want to take care that the work of the volunteers does not end in mere self-satisfaction, devoting as much of our time and labor as possible.

To make the life of the elderly more enjoyable, athletic meets, food festivals (above) and opening of a shop for everyday necessities have been attempted. Church women volunteers play active part at such occasions.

— An Open Window to the Churches of the World —

This committee serves as our window and as a bridge between Japanese churches and those in other countries.

*The Least Coin Fellowship — We belong to the fellowship of prayer started in Asia in 1964. Once a month, praying and offering the "least coin" seems like a very ordinary and small matter, yet when done by many church women it has great meaning. The weight of the collection of these one yen coins symbolizes its importance. This sticker (below), is put on containers which are placed conveniently in kitchens or meeting places. Using these containers we join the prayer circle of all Christian sisters throughout the world and think of the work of the Lord outside our country. It is a great joy to note that this funds makes possible every 4th year the Asian Church Women's Conference which strengthens the solidarity of Christian sisters in Asia.

*Fellowship with Students and Visitors from Abroad — It has been many years since we started to invite leaders from Asian countries who study at the Asian Rural Institute presently located in Nishinasuno, to Christian homes and churches in Tokyo. We learn much from such real fellowship. Church women throughout the country wish to have a deeper fellowship by welcoming guests and students from abroad.

*World Day of Prayer — World Day of Prayer is observed by Christian women throughout the country on the first Friday in March. It deepens ecumenical fellowship everywhere and encourages cooperative work locally. In some places the Catholic church joins us. The theme for 1974 is "Peace Building". It is a true honor and great joy for us that Japanese church women worked together to complete the format for this prayer service and were able to actually serve the world ecumenical movement.



The Badge (above) of the National Federation of the Kyodan Women's Societies carries a double meaning: "To glean the field is to finish the work that others have left undone," and also, "A grain of wheat remains a solitary grain unless it falls into the ground and dies; but if it dies it bears a rich harvest — John 12:24."